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Jonathan Lindley  
The Paoli Pioneer

BY  
Nancy Lindley Oslund



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# JONATHAN LINDLEY

## THE PAOLI PIONEER

AS I LOOK through my numerous faded diaries, scrapbooks and old letters, I wonder if there are other people who would like to hear about the early settlers of Paoli, Indiana. At one time most all the inhabitants of Orange County, Indiana, were descendants of Jonathan Lindley. To those that are interested, I give the stories as they have been handed down to me.

It was April 1811, when the anti-slavery group of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, as they were more commonly called, left Cane Creek, North Carolina, bound for the North West Territory. Jonathan Lindley directed the party.

These pioneers were lured to this new country by a prohibited slavery clause in the constitution. Here white labor was looked upon as honourable, and their children would have opportunities for work.

At the first hint of early southern spring, when the yellow jasmine bloomed, the house-hold goods were packed in the large bedded wagons. Two hundred people in the neighborhood, with creaking oxcarts started on the journey over rough and rugged mountains, through shaggy buffalo trails to the unbroken wilderness. They traveled with a mighty desire to migrate to new surroundings, as everyone was seized with

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the restless tide of humanity that followed the Revolutionary War.

Security from the uprising Indians was promised by the treaty of 1795, according to which the Delawares, Ottawas, Shawnees, Pottawatamies, and Eel River Indians had ceded a large portion of the territory to the United States, with only hunting privileges and peaceful occupations for themselves.

Safety and medical aid could be obtained for the settlements near Military Posts. Fort Harrison on the prairie above where Terre Haute is now located and the French Fort Vincennes, the capital of the territory; these were already established in the southern part of the North West Territory.

The country between these posts and the primitive forest known to us as Cox's Woods, had been visited in 1808 by Jonathan Lindley and Jessie Towell. These men returned to North Carolina with glowing accounts of the rich land and heavy forests.

The enthusiastic homesteaders with their liberated slaves, undertook the 800 mile journey with bright hopes for the future.

Among the group was a renegade "nigger" nicknamed Aleck Polecat, who was red-headed, bow-legged and pigeon-toed. He was quite a character with his nit-wit jokes. Another fellow in the party complained of his

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money going like butter before the sun, and when asked how much he had, he replied "thirty five cents".

Some were anxious to reach their destination and would not stop with those who rested and observed the Lord's Day. Invariably at the end of each week they were overtaken by the pious ones.

At the Falls of the Ohio River, they camped three weeks, waiting for the river to reach a low stage. Then they placed the covered wagons on skids and the animals swam to the opposite shore with the heavy loads.

The company overpowered with the promise of freedom, were all of a sudden, encountered with the troublesome Indians on the southern border of North West Territory.

Jonathan's son, Thomas, and his wife, Amy, decided to remain with their party and not locate on the Wabash River. They traveled the vast unbroken wilderness together to the blockhouse fort at Half Moon Spring near the Lick Creek stream.

The dense darkness of the deep woodland with oppressive loneliness on the first night even affected Jonathan Lindley's yellow dog. After howling all night, he was missing the next morning. Later the post rider brought a letter, which told of the dog's safe arrival at Cane Creek, North Carolina.

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The Indian affairs on the southern and north western frontiers had assumed such alarming nature as to cause the new settlers much trouble.

Governor William Henry Harrison called on Jonathan Lindley. They talked over the situation all night. In the morning Jonathan took Harrison's advice and decided to remain at Lick Creek instead of going on to the Wabash.

Legends have been handed down about the devotion and religious beliefs of these early pioneers. It has been related that they erected the meeting house before they built their permanent homes. They held meetings in their schooners and crude shelters until 1813. Jonathan Lindley donated two acres of land for the meeting house of worship which they built "according to the dictates of conscience"—a one story building with a sliding partition in the middle of the room, to be opened or closed as the meeting demanded. The business meetings were held behind closed shutters. The men and women held separate business affairs. On Sundays the shutters were open and the men with large brimmed hats sat on one side, while the women with black quilted satin bonnets sat on the other side. The custom of never removing the hat to anyone was instituted by John Perrot in 1663.

During the religious meeting they sat silently waiting for the spirit to move them to speak. They arose and



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spoke in the quaint language of Thee and Thou, whatever was on their mind. Often the spirit did not move anyone and they sat for hours quietly. The overseers, elders and ministers on the elevated bench in front of the audience would shake hands with each other, then the meeting was dismissed.

In 1815 Jonathan Lindley was an elder. William, Thomas, and Jonathan Lindley, Evan Jones and Thomas Atkinson were appointed, as stated in the records, "to attend the subject respecting an institution for instruction of the youth." The following taken from the Friend's minute book casts a gleam of light on the Friend's rigid rules and discipline. "For aught appears the Friend's endeavor by example and precept to educate their children and those under their care, in plainness of speech, deportment and apparel; they guard them against reading pernicious books and from corrupt conversations of the world and encourage them to read the Holy Scripture."

Amy Lindley and a number of the Friends were conscientious against placing themselves in the blockhouse at Half Moon Spring for their own protection against the Indians. They experienced no harm, although a man (not a Friend) was killed by a gunshot while plowing in the field.

Another peculiarity was the marriage ceremony. The contract repeated by both bride and groom was un-

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doubtedly an adaptation from the prevailing contract in the Seventeenth Century of the Church of England. The simple agreement between the two interested parties, after having secured the consent of the marriage from monthly meeting and without the intervention of a minister or magistrate, took each other in marriage. A copy of the marriage of William the son of Jonathan Lindley to Michel Hollowell is given.

Whereas William Lindley of Washington County Indiana Territory, son of Jonathan Lindley of the county and Territory aforesaid and Deborah, his wife, the female Deseased and Michel Hollowell, Daughter of Robert Hollowell of the county and Territory aforesaid and Elizabeth, his wife, having declaired their intentions of Marriage with each other before a monthly meeting held at Lick Creek according to the good order used among them. Their Said proposels of marriage was allowed by said meeting. Now these are to certify whom it may concern that for the full accomplishment of their intentions this thirtyeth day of the third month, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and fourteen (1814) they the said William Lindley and Michel Hollowell appeared in a public meeting of people held at Lick Creek meeting house afforsaid in Washington County, and the said William Lindley taking the said Michel by the hand and openly declair that he took her to be his wife, promising with divine assistance to be unto her a loving

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and faithful husband until Death should separate them and then in same assembly the said Michel Hollowell did in like manner Declare that she took him the William Lindley to be her husband promising with divine assistance to ve unto him a loving and faithfull wife untio Death should separate them and moreover the Said William Lindley and Michel Hollowell—she according to the custom of Marriage assuming the name of her husband did as a further confirmation of them there to these presents set her hand.

William Lindley

Michel Lindley

And we whose names are hereunto subscribed being present at the solemnisation of the marriage and subscription have as witnesses theirto set our hands the day and year above written.

Henry Towel

Ann Holaday

Jane Lindley

Hannah Braxtan

Jane Crow

William Lindley

Ester Cox

Sarah Bales

Abigail Crow

Catherine Hadley

Jane Maris

John Maris

William Holaday

Mary Lindley

Rachel Dicks

Solomon Cox

Jonathan Lindley

Martha Lindley

Eleanor Chambers

Margaret Lindley

Sarah Lindley

Ruth Dicks

Queen Esther Lindley

Deborah Lindley

Catherine Lindley

Margaret Dicks

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WILLIAM LINDLEY'S HOME; Birthplace of Dr. Laban Lindley

At the marriage of each of Jonathan Lindley's twelve children, he gave them a grandfather clock and a Bible. He also donated land for their homes. William built a new home for his bride, Michel on the land at Cle River Falls, (Coon Creek) where Belle Scott lives, one mile east of Paoli.

In the fall of the same year (1814), the abundant crop of Indian corn, necessitated the building of a water powered grist mill. There was no outlet in the great markets and corn sold at ten cents a bushel. Jonathan Lindley erected the mill on his ground at the rise of Stamperscreek. This underground stream flowed under the town of Livonia, through the country to





THE GRIST MILL

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emerge at Spring Mill and form the large stream of Lick Creek. The farmers came on horseback, seated on the meal sacks. They came over "tater road" from the south, down Grease Gravy steep hill, near by Africa settlement and from Paddy's Garden or Alec Polecat's Hole. While they sat and waited their turn of the grist, they discussed the topics of the day. Many anecdotes and tales of shooting bears, wolves, panthers and deer were told to the listening crowd by hunters. Here, also, the pioneers bartered with the Indians, their farm produce and ardent spirits being accepted for meat, maple sugar, skins, furs or other articles manufactured by the Indians.

The meat packers, William Lindey and others discussed the prices on hogs they shipped by flat boats to New Orleans markets. This type of craft carried 300 barrels of pork a load and it took a month to pole down the Mississippi. Many stories have been handed down of those who lived in Paddy's Garden. This was a parcel of ground given the liberated slaves, which the settlers brought from North Carolina. They were given an opportunity to toil and earn their own living. Alec Polecat was not a farmer, so he earned his living by being a peddler. He carried his wares in a wheelbarrow and entertained his customers at night with his fiddle and jokes about the Friends.

A story was told of an illiterate storekeeper who



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Nancy Lindley   Mabel Trimble   Dorothy Farlow  
Friends Centenary 1913

drew pictures instead of writing the accounts. A man was called in to pay for a cheese he had bought. He denied having bought the cheese but after looking at the drawn circle with a square hole in the center, he remembered he owed the storekeeper for a grindstone.

There must have been many whispering conversations in this group, for the underground railroad had been established. (1815)

This system by the aid of the Friends flourished for

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forty years. Many a slave was helped on his way to Canada and freedom.

The story telling group at the grist mill did not realize what lay ahead of them, by their removal of the forest and the breaking of the ground. The numerous creeks with drift and fallen timbers caused the overflow to stand stagnant in the lowlands. Whole neighborhoods were seized with a fever, the ague of real shaking, quaking variety. The bold treatment of large doses of Calomel were administered and the patients were bled freely. The "puke and purge" method was used. Those patients who survived, resumed the business of the new settlement in the spring.

A court of justice was held at the home of William Lindley, February, 1816. He received nine dollars for holding the sessions of court until June. His older brother Zachariah, the sheriff, supervised the meetings. He was a large, strong, active man, utterly destitute of fear, was a terror to evil doers. It is said, "that he took the law in his own hands, and often did not return the horse thief to the courts."

The report of the county commissioners, William Lindley one of the commissioners, was read. The county agent, Jonathan Lindley, was directed to lay out the new town in lots. This tract of land had been bought for \$1,305 from Thomas Hopper and Thomas Lindley.



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Later the sale of lots in the town sold as high as \$300 and 223 lots brought \$6,423. A name for the town was discussed and the pioneers thought it would be fitting to perpetuate the memory of the brilliant son of the Governor Ashe of North Carolina, who had died shortly before they left the Old North State. Pasquale Paoli Ashe had been named for the Corsican hero.

The second session of court was held in a log building in north west corner of the Public Square.

Jonathan Lindley and others had to pay the court five dollar exemption fee from military duty or service in times of peace. These were conscientiously scrupulous against bearing of arms.

A new court house was contracted for \$4000 by Jonathan Lindley. This is not the present building. Land speculation rose high and the court records show the Lindleys to be the heaviest buyers.

Jonathan Lindley brought with him on his trip from North Carolina \$100,000 in gold. He invested heavily in land with these earnings from his lumber and turpentine business he had disposed of, in the South. His will was the largest estate administered in the county in the early twenties.

Other interest besides the erection of public buildings was the Friend's education of women. They believed in women's rights and permitted them to preach the word of God. In all affairs women had their say.

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January 20th 1820 an act was approved by the governor providing for the organization of a State Seminary at Bloomington, Indiana. The act named as trustees of the seminary, Charles Dewey, Jonathan Lindley, David H. Maxwell, John M. Jenkins, Jonathan Nicholas and William Lowe. They were to meet in Bloomington on the first Monday in June for the selection of a site for the school. They were given authority to have the land in the township laid off and bought. Banta's "History of Indiana", says, "Jonathan Lindley was a splendid selection for this purpose". This seminary later became known as the Indiana University. The History of Orange County says, "Jonathan Lindley the most influential citizen of his time."

Jonathan Lindley's wife, Deborah Dix, died before the first year was spent in her new home.

In 1812 he married Martha Sanders Henley, a widow whom he had known in Guilford, North Carolina. She had twelve children and Jonathan had twelve. Guli Elma was born to this union. This made Jonathan the father of twenty five children.

The Friends early discipline forbade marriage outside of the members of the church, consequently cousins married cousins. Big families were looked upon as a blessing and as aid for old age. The Lindleys were numerous and it is a problem today to trace the Lind-

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ley relationship.

The following were the children of Jonathan Lindley and Deborah Dix:

Zacharias	Born 7-26-1776__	Married Thursay Mosier
Hannah	10-22-1777__	" Thomas Braxtan
Ruth	4-25-1780__	" Joseph Farlow
Thomas	4-26-1782__	" Amy Thompson
Elinar	6-10-1784__	" Samuel Chambers
William	1-19-1787__	" Michel Hollowell
Sec. marriage to Anna Knight  Fisher		
Deborah	9- 6-1789__	Married James Jones
Mary	1-23-1792__	" Silas Dixon
Catherine	3-23-1794__	" Ned McVey
Queen Esther	3-23-1794__	" Alex Clark
Sarah	9- 1-1796__	" Wm. Haley
Jonathan	9- 8-1800__	" Mary Lindley

Jonathan and Martha Sanders Henley\_\_Guli Elma\_\_  
12-20-1813, married Levi Woody; second, Jesse Horney.

Jonathan Lindley died in 1828 at the age of seventy two and was buried beside his first wife Deborah Dix in the Lick Creek Cemetery.

The Quakers permeated every new land, with peaceful ways, honesty and integrity. They were leaders in reforms and in the building up of a peaceful civilization. To them we owe a debt of gratitude for what they have done for us.







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